IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method for inhibiting activity of a T lymphocyte against a target cell, which method comprises contacting the target cell with a soluble form of a human CD8 molecule which has no specific antigen-binding capability other than that of native CD8 and which is folded as a dimer and has the property of inhibiting the action of cytotoxic T cell lymphocytes to kill target cells, wherein at least one α chain of said molecule (a) has SEQ ID NO:24 ~~SEQ ID NO:23~~ or (b) differs from SEQ ID NO:24 ~~SEQ ID NO:23~~ in one or more of the following respects:

(i) methionine is absent at the N-terminus;

(ii) 1-15 amino acid residues are absent from the N-terminus;

(iii) part or all of SEQ ID NO:27 is added at the N-terminus:

(iv) 1-15 amino acids are absent from the C-terminus; but with at least a part of the region defined by amino acid residues 116-120 retained;

(v) part or all of SEQ ID NO:28 is added at the C-terminus;

(vi) ~~a conservative variant of at least one amino acid residue which does not materially affect the CD8 functionality of the protein;~~

~~(vii) at least one mutation which does alter the CD8 functionality,~~

~~(viii)~~ (vii) the addition of a protein or peptide, at the N or C terminus, for the purpose of purification;

~~(ix)~~ (viii) the provision of a label for detection.

2-4. (canceled)

5. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the soluble CD8 is provided as a multimer of two or more CD8 molecules.

6-24. (canceled)

25. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the soluble CD8 is a CD8 αα molecule.

26. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the soluble CD8 is a CD8 αβ molecule.

27. (previously presented) The method of claim 5, wherein the soluble CD8 is provided as a multimer of two or more CD8 αα molecules.

28. (previously presented) The method of claim 5, wherein the soluble CD8 is provided as a multimer of two or more CD8 αβ molecules.

29. (new) A method of treatment of autoimmune disease comprising administering to a subject in need thereof an effective amount of a CD8αα molecule lacking a CD8 transmembrane domain but including a CD8 immunoglobulin domain and having no specific antigen-binding capability other than that of native CD8.